

Appl. No. 09/662,532  
Amdt. dated Sept. 2, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of June 14, 2004

REMARKS

In view of both the amendments presented above and the following discussion, the Applicants submit that none of the claims now pending in the application is obvious under the provisions of 35 USC § 103. Thus, the Applicants believe that all of these claims are now in allowable form.

If, however, the Examiner believes that there are any unresolved issues requiring adverse final action in any of the claims now pending in the application, the Examiner should telephone Mr. Peter L. Michaelson, Esq. at (732) 530-6671 so that appropriate arrangements can be made for resolving such issues as expeditiously as possible.

Abstract amendments

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure inasmuch as the Abstract contained legal phraseology. In response, the Applicants have now enclosed a substitute abstract on a separate sheet herewith.

Drawings

The Examiner has objected to Fig. 1 of the Applicants' drawings, as filed. Specifically, the Examiner stated that this figure lacked labels and hence required the Applicants to submit proposed drawing corrections to remedy this omission.

In response, the Applicants have now enclosed a red-lined drawing sheet which shows their proposed

Appl. No. 09/662,532  
Amdt. dated Sept. 2, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of June 14, 2004

corrections to Fig. 1, specifically missing labels for those components shown in the figure which are not self-evident to those skilled in the art.

Status of pending claims

Independent claims 16 and 17 are new and formed by combining the substantive limitations of claims 1 and 4, and 7 and 10, respectively.

Independent claim 18, which is also new, is identical in wording to claim 12 but corrected, as per the Examiner's request, to eliminate an erroneous indentation.

Independent claim 19 is new and is formed by combining the substantive limitations of claims 14 and 4.

Claims 1, 4, 7, 10, 12 and 14 have now been canceled.

Claims 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13 and 15 have each been amended.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 4 and 10 as being dependent on a rejected base claim. The Examiner stated that claims 4 and 10 would be allowable if rewritten into independent form to include all the limitations of the base and intervening claims.

Appl. No. 09/662,532  
Amdt. dated Sept. 2, 2004  
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In response, the Applicant has replaced claims 1 and 4, and 7 and 10 with new independent claims 16 and 17 which respectively combine the limitations of claims 1 and 4, and 7 and 10. Hence, these new claims and all claims dependent therefrom are allowable.

Further, the Examiner has objected to claims 4 and 12, owing to their inclusion of various informalities. These informalities have been corrected in substitute claims 16 and 18, respectively. The Applicants have chosen to simply replace allowed claim 12 with identically worded new claim 18 but with the proper indentation (rather than using brackets to delete the extraneous indentation) in order to simplify printing at the US PTO.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-3, 5-9, 11 and 13-15 under the provisions of 35 USC § 103 as being obvious over the teachings in the Wood patent (United States patent 6,108,702 issued to M. Wood on August 22, 2000) taken in view of the Isaka et al patent (United States patent 6,658,020 issued to M. Isaka et al on December 2, 2003).

In view of the claim amendments made herein, this rejection is now moot.

Specifically, independent claims 1 and 7 have now been canceled and replaced with new independent claims 16 and 17. Claims 16 and 17 respectively incorporate the limitations of claims 1 and 4, and 7 and 10 -- combinations which the Examiner has indicated are allowable. Given this,

Appl. No. 09/662,532  
Amdt. dated Sept. 2, 2004  
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dependent claims 2, 3, 5 and 6; and 8, 9 and 11 have been amended to now depend from new claims 16 and 17, respectively. Hence, these dependent claims, which recite additional distinguishing limitations and depend from allowable independent claims, are now patentable as well.

Further, claim 13 has been amended to refer to allowable independent claim 16, and as such is also allowable.

Lastly, independent claim 14 has been canceled and replaced by new independent claim 19. Independent claim 14 contains recitations parallel to those previously recited in claim 1. Inasmuch as claim 19 also includes recitations parallel to those in claim 4, the Applicants submit that inasmuch as new independent claim 16 formed of the limitations of prior claims 1 and 14 is allowable, so is new independent claim 19 formed of the limitations of prior claims 14 and 4.

#### Conclusion

Thus, the Applicants submit that none of the claims, presently in the application, is obvious under the provisions of 35 USC § 103.

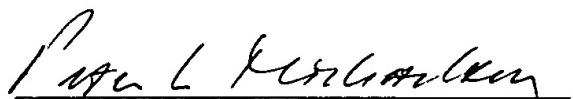
Consequently, the Applicants believe that all these claims are presently in condition for allowance.

Appl. No. 09/662,532  
Amdt. dated Sept. 2, 2004  
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Accordingly, both reconsideration of this application and its swift passage to issue are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

September 2, 2004

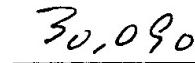
  
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